

CALIFORNIA CROP WEATHER



USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service
California Field Office

WEEK ENDING: March 12, 2006
RELEASED: March 13, 2006

FREQUENCY: Weekly
VOL. 25 NO. 37

WEATHER



The week began with widespread precipitation falling across the entire State, as a broad area of low pressure moved over the west coast. This pattern persisted through early Wednesday, when the low pressure finally moved out of the State. Midweek was dry and cool, as the State remained between weather systems. This respite was short-lived, as a very cold low pressure system approached the State, bringing cool and unstable conditions. These conditions resulted in widespread thunderstorm activity with heavy rains and hail. The cold air resulted in very low snow levels, with many foothill locations and even some valley areas seeing a rare snowfall.

FIELD CROPS

Rains helped the growth of many crops. **Sugar beets** continued to emerge in the central part of the State. **Wheat**, dry land **barley** and **oats** were progressing well. **Safflower** and **garbanzos** showed good growth. A few **potato** fields near Bakersfield were damaged by last week's freeze. Herbicide applications in winter wheat and **alfalfa** fields continued. Some **cotton** fields were pre-irrigated. **Corn** planting was delayed due to weather conditions in Tulare County. Some small grain fields were damaged by flood waters in Sonoma County.

FRUIT CROPS

Most **grape** vineyards have been pruned and tied, but a few growers continued to prune as weather conditions allowed. Vineyards were treated for weed control, disked and furrowed for irrigation, and protected against frost. Applications of soil amendments were ongoing as well as spray applications for vine mealybug in many vineyards. Grafting of grape varieties was underway in many locations. Some grape vines in the San Joaquin Valley were beginning to leaf out. Early stone fruit varieties were in full bloom, and growers were irrigating to reduce potential frost damage. Early variety **nectarines** began leafing out. Growers continued to apply dormant sprays and prune trees as weather permitted. The cold weather experienced lately may have caused some damage to fruit trees, but the full extent will not be known for a few weeks. **Strawberry** plants continued to show good growth in the San Joaquin Valley and some have begun to bloom. Strawberry picking continued in the coastal growing regions. The harvesting of Navel **oranges**, **grapefruit**, **lemons**, **mandarins**, **tangelos**, and **tangerines** continued with good yields and quality noted. The second application of copper, zinc, and lime fungicides continued to be made to oranges to meet export requirements. Navel orange packing activity was very busy. Packout percentages continued to decline due to rind puff and small sizes. Juice plants were at full capacity. Pruning activities and herbicide applications continued in **olive** orchards.

NUT CROPS

Pistachio trees in Fresno County began pushing buds. Growers continued to assess the amount of damage caused by cold temperatures in **almond** orchards. Almonds continued to bloom. Early varieties were in the petal fall stage and leafing out. Many orchards continued to be treated with fungicides to prevent blossom rot.

VEGETABLE CROPS

Insecticide and herbicide applications to control aphids, mildew and loopers in **lettuce**, **garlic** and **onion** fields continued. Rainfall caused muddy fields and delayed **broccoli** and **asparagus** harvest in many areas, but the harvesting pace increased near the week's end. Rainy weather also slowed ground work for spring planting in many areas. Early **egg plant** and **squash** showed good progression. **Lettuce**, garlic and onions were doing well. Some lettuce growers planned to begin harvest next week. **Spinach** and **cabbage** crops were progressing well. Some cabbage growers had intentions to start harvest before St. Patrick's Day. Muddy fields stopped the planting of **tomatoes** in Fresno County, but tomatoes that were planted earlier in the season were growing well under hot caps. Many growers had plastic bedding in place for summer vegetables. **Carrots** were being harvested near Bakersfield. Farther south in Imperial County, the harvest of winter produce was winding down, while the pace of the carrot harvest increased. The harvest of cool season Asian vegetables such as **cauliflower**, **bok choy**, **daikon**, **gai choy napa cabbage**, **sugar pea leaf**, **snow pea leaf** and **yu choy** continued.

LIVESTOCK

Rain for the second consecutive week was very positive for foothill pastures. The rain was especially beneficial to central California where some pastures had turned brown during the warm dry spell. Supplemental feeding of livestock was rare. Stocker cattle and calves were reported to be in good condition. In central California, ewes and lambs were grazing on foothill pastures with a few still in old alfalfa or retired crop land fields. Old crop lambs continued to ship from pastures in the Imperial Valley. Weight gains were reported to be above normal on winter pastured lambs in the southern California desert this season. Calves were grazing in old alfalfa fields in the Imperial Valley. Milking conditions at dairies were not ideal with rain, wind, and colder temperatures. Bees were trying to work in almond, cherry and plum orchards, but rainy, cold, and windy weather was hampering their activity.

CALIFORNIA CROP WEATHER -- WEEK ENDING 03/12/06

STATIONS	TEMPERATURE				GROWING DEGREE DAYS AT 60°F BASE		PRECIPITATION			
	Average Week Ending 03/12/06	Departure from Normal	High	Low	This Season	Normal	This Season		Normal	
					January 1 - 03/12/06	January 1 - 03/12/06	Week Ending 03/12/06	July 1 - 03/12/06	July 1 - 03/12/06	July 1 - June 30
	-- Degrees Fahrenheit --				-- Number --		-- Inches --			
NORTH COAST										
Eureka	42	-8	51	30	0	0	2.82	53.18	29.59	37.53
Ukiah	44	-9	56	31	0	0	1.96	37.43	31.99	37.96
Santa Rosa	44	-9	57	30	0	0	1.44	33.70	25.46	30.30
CENTRAL COAST										
San Francisco AP	48	-6	59	37	0	0	1.23	18.63	16.71	19.70
San Jose	49	-7	63	38	1	0	1.33	13.44	12.06	14.42
Livermore Tele	--	--	--	--	1	0	0.00	0.00	11.73	14.21
Salinas AP	48	-6	60	36	8	0	1.34	8.92	10.11	12.44
Monterey FAA	48	-4	59	37	10	0	1.46	9.25	12.23	18.72
King City	--	--	61	37	2	0	0.60	9.17	9.79	11.44
Paso Robles AP	46	-7	61	32	0	0	1.17	9.42	10.88	13.95
SACRAMENTO VALLEY										
Redding	43	-10	57	28	8	0	1.62	35.61	26.97	33.30
Red Bluff FSS	44	-9	59	28	2	0	1.32	23.68	18.94	22.29
Chico AFS	46	-7	58	32	0	0	3.92	25.48	21.09	26.32
Marysville	47	-9	59	32	0	0	1.88	21.05	17.90	21.04
Sacramento AP	47	-7	59	32	0	0	1.03	16.77	14.61	17.52
SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY										
Stockton WSO	48	-6	63	35	0	0	1.35	11.55	11.00	13.95
Fresno	48	-7	59	36	0	0	0.75	7.46	8.67	10.60
Bakersfield	50	-7	62	36	8	0	0.81	3.72	4.90	5.72
SOUTH COAST										
Santa Maria AP	49	-5	62	37	6	0	1.98	11.08	11.16	12.36
Santa Barbara	51	-5	70	36	2	0	1.10	10.77	14.18	16.25
Oxnard	--	--	--	--	68	0	0.00	0.00	12.92	14.38
Los Angeles	52	-9	63	39	88	18	0.20	7.69	12.32	14.77
Riverside	50	-7	70	33	92	0	0.15	3.97	8.58	9.58
San Diego AP	56	-3	66	47	36	0	0.53	3.03	8.45	9.90
SOUTHEAST INTERIOR										
Bishop	38	-9	60	18	0	0	0.03	7.24	4.01	5.37
Lancaster	45	-7	59	31	0	0	0.11	5.08	6.47	6.92
Daggett AP	51	-7	70	35	3	0	0.13	0.97	3.52	3.93
Thermal AP	56	-7	74	33	60	41	0.24	2.35	3.25	3.16
Blythe	57	-7	75	38	73	46	0.31	2.51	3.66	3.60
Imperial	59	-5	74	42	86	69	0.47	1.87	2.71	2.75
CASCADE - SIERRA										
Alturas	25	-12	45	3	0	0	0.53	10.97	8.18	12.01
Mt. Shasta	30	-10	43	15	0	0	2.49	43.65	30.91	37.02
Blue Canyon	27	-12	40	17	0	0	3.41	65.23	52.07	67.04
Yosemite	--	--	43	19	0	0	1.22	31.70	30.18	37.05

Normal is defined as average over the 30-year period 1961 through 1990. Dashes (- -) in Average Week Ending and Departure from Normal columns mean less than five days reporting, while in High and Low columns mean no days reporting.

Weekly summary provided by the Western Regional Climate Center with data reported by the National Weather Service. When data are quality controlled by the National Climatic Data Center, the accumulated growing degree day and precipitation values are updated.